



John L. Cattelan
Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs
S.B. 204, AN ACT CONCERNING
CAMPERS' EDUCATION
Children Committee
February 27, 2014

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and members of the Children Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is John Cattelan and I am here today on behalf of the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs. The Alliance represents 22 YMCAs across the state of Connecticut.

I'm here today to raise concerns regarding S.B. 204, An Act Concerning Campers' Education.

If the state of Connecticut is going to start with education/prevention programs for specific illnesses, where will it stop? All of Connecticut's YMCAs implement and enforce appropriate safeguards and response systems to ensure camper well-being and safety.

Our YMCA camp handbook, parent handbook and staff manual already contain information regarding ticks, Lyme Disease, injury and abuse. All camp parents are required to sign a document confirming they have reviewed all of the information before their child is allowed to attend camp.

At our resident camps each child showers daily and is reminded to check themselves for ticks. In addition, our staff are trained to remind campers to check themselves for ticks and are reminded to apply and reapply bug spray.

Injury and abuse reporting is explained to every camper by camp directors and individually by counselors. All cases of injury and abuse are documented. There already are mandated reporting standards that deal with these issues, so we are unsure why new legislation is necessary.

We strongly support background checks of all of our staff and volunteers and that is currently our practice. However, the language in Section 4 of the proposed bill would now require fingerprinting. First of all, the fingerprinting of all staff and volunteers is a very expensive proposition. Secondly, the timing to conduct fingerprinting of staff is unattainable. Our camp staff returns from school at the end of May and they are interviewed the first two weeks of June. If they are hired, they begin work immediately. Sometimes it takes up to three months for an employee to clear this type of background check.